

REMARKS

Claims 8-11 and 16-20 are currently pending in the present patent application. In an Office Action mailed 24 March 2005, the Examiner rejected claims 8-32 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,946,217 to Lhoest ("Lhoest") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,522,309 to Mizobuchi *et al.* ("Mizobuchi") and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,788,980B1 to Johnson ("Johnson").

As stated in the prior response filed 21 December 2004, although the Examiner indicates in the Office Action that claims 8-32 are pending claims 12-15 were cancelled in a Preliminary Amendment filed 21 January 2004. Accordingly, only claims 8-11 and 16-20 are currently pending.

Claim 8 recites an assembly for electronically controlling the input of solution to multiple solution receptacles. The assembly includes a solution reservoir and a solution receptacle feeder attached to the solution reservoir. A computer is capable of generating an electronic signal having an address component identifying the solution receptacle feeder and an instruction component indicating a volume of the solution to be delivered to the solution reservoir. A transceiver is capable of sending and receiving the electronic signal.

The Lhoest patent is directed to an installation or multi-story factory for transporting containers 210 of products that flow by gravity. The containers 210 containing products are transported to feed stations 110a and containers that receive product are transported to reception stations 110b. While Lhoest discloses generally the computerization of the disclosed system, there is no disclosure or suggestion in Lhoest of generating an electronic signal that identifies a feeder for filling a container 210 and that indicates the volume of solution to be delivered to that container. For example, in column 12, lines 10-22, Lhoest discusses a detection system to determine the type of product in a container 210. There is no disclosure in Lhoest of generating such an electronic signal to fill the containers 210.

The Mizobuchi patent discloses a number of food processing devices, such as devices 110 and 111 of Figure 1 and carrier vessels 210 for transporting food materials from one processing device to another. All amounts delivered in the Mizobuchi system appear to be predetermined amounts, and are not determined through "an instruction component of an electronic signal indicating a volume of the solution to be delivered." For example, liquids stored in the first processing devices

110 and 100 are transferred in predetermined amounts to the second processing device 120 by means of pipes 112 and 113. *See, e.g.*, col. 12, lines 52-58. "Predetermined amounts of liquid materials are [then] introduced into the compartment of the first carrier vessel 201 through a quantitative filling device." *Id.* at 59-62. Processed products in the compartments of the first carrier vessels 210 are introduced into the second carrier vessel 220 of Figure 2. *See* column 14, lines 30-44. These processed products are introduced into the introduction device 300 and "predetermined amounts thereof are introduced into the compartments of the second carrier vessels 220 by a quantitative device and a filling device of [the] introduction device in the same way as in the first carrier vessels 210." *Id.* Only predetermined amounts are delivered in the system of Mizobuchi, in contrast to any amount defined by the instruction component of the electronic signal recited in claim 8. The combination of elements recited in claim 8 is therefore allowable.

Moreover, the undersigned does not agree with the Examiner's assertion that there is a suggestion/motivation to combine Lhoest and Mizobuchi. *See* Office Action, page 3. Lhoest is directed to a facility for transporting containers and identifying the contents of such containers as they are being transported, and is not concerned with the filling such containers. Tracking and transporting such containers is a different problem than supplying contents to such containers. While the contents of the containers in Lhoest will eventually be dispensed, the same is true of any container and its contents. There is no motivation to combine Lhoest and Mizobuchi.

For these additional reasons, the combination of elements recited in claim 8 is allowable. Independent claim 16 is allowable for reasons similar to those just discussed with regard to claim 8.

Amended claim 21 recites a system for controlling the input of a liquid to multiple liquid receptacles. The system includes at least one liquid reservoir and a computer capable of generating an electronic signal having an address component and an instruction component including type information indicating the type of liquid to be provided and volume information indicating the volume of a liquid to be provided. A receptacle feeder is coupled to the computer to receive the electronic signal and is coupled to each liquid reservoir. The receptacle feeder is operable to provide liquid from at least one liquid reservoir when the address component of the

electronic signal from the computer corresponds to an address associated with the receptacle feeder, with the volume and type of liquid provided corresponding to the volume and type information.

Mizobuchi does not disclose a computer capable of generating an electronic signal having an instruction component including type information indicating the type of liquid to be provided and volume information indicating the volume of a liquid to be provided. Carrier vessels in Mizobuchi are routed to processing devices containing the required contents, and there is no receptacle feeder that receives the electronic signal and that operates to provide liquid from at least one liquid reservoir responsive to address and instruction components of the electronic signal. The combination of elements recited in claim 21 is accordingly allowable.

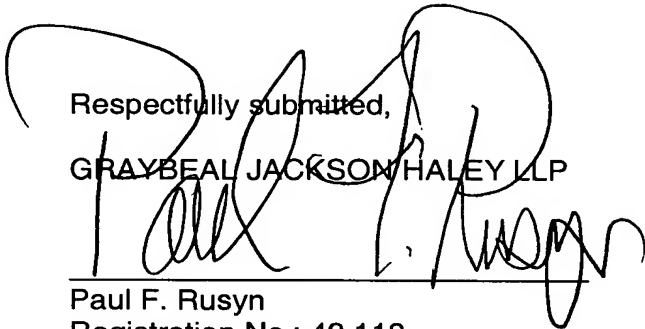
Claim 27 recites a method of providing liquid to a plurality of liquid receptacles. The method includes identifying a particular liquid receptacle to which liquid is to be provided and generating an electronic signal including an address component and an instruction component. The instruction component is a function of the identified liquid receptacle. The method determines whether the address component has a particular value and when the address component has the particular value, provides the liquid to the liquid receptacle as a function of the instruction component.

According to the recited method, depending on the identified liquid receptacle different liquids may be supplied. In contrast, there is no suggestion in Mizobuchi that liquid is provided from a given source as a function of the identified container. Instead, Mizobuchi routes the containers to required sources to obtain the desired liquid. Furthermore, Mizobuchi deals only with predetermined amounts as previously discussed, and therefore does not disclose an electronic signal having an instruction component that may have any value. Accordingly, the combination of elements recited in amended claim 27 is allowable.

All claims dependent on the independent claims are allowable for the same reasons as the independent claims, and because of the additional limitations added by the dependent claims.

The present patent application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and a Notice of Allowance are respectfully requested. The Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the number listed below for a telephone

interview if, upon consideration of this amendment, the Examiner determines any pending claims are not in condition for allowance.



Respectfully submitted,

GRAYBEAL JACKSON HALEY LLP

Paul F. Rusyn

Registration No.: 42,118

155 108th Ave. NE, Suite 350

Bellevue, WA 98004-5973

Telephone: (425) 455-5575

Facsimile: (425) 455-1046